

Babad Alit (Chronicle for Children)

Kebumen 1911

I. Ponorogo

Following the fall of the Majapahit kingdom in the year 1400 (Saka), the son of the King of Majapahit, named Raden Djaka Pitoeroet (also known as Raden Blakhali), submitted to the Sultan of Demak. Raden Djaka Pitoeroet subsequently converted to Islam and attained the rank of a *Wali* (saint), bearing the title Batara Katong. While he was still a novice in his study of Islamic theology, he possessed profound insight and intellect. Consequently, the Sultan of Demak commissioned him to proselytize to the Javanese people who still adhered to the "Buda" (Hindu-Buddhist) religion in the vicinity of Mount Lawu (present-day Madiun Residency). The leader of these adherents was a high-ranking official known as Ki Ageng, stationed in Koetoe (present-day Djetis district, Ponorogo).

Batara Katong prepared an expeditionary force of forty men, all of whom were devout Muslims proficient in the recitation of the Qur'an and religious texts. The leader of this force was Ki Ageng Mirah, a trusted confidant of Batara Katong. Their journey from Demak proceeded southeast until they reached the village of Plampitan (now the *merdikan* village of Soelana under Batara Katong's jurisdiction). There, Batara Katong and his followers taught Islam to the local population. When Ki Ageng Koetoe heard of these activities, he did not initially interfere, recognizing the authority of the Sultan of Demak. After several years, the northern regions had largely converted. Batara Katong then moved south to Nglangoe, near Ki Ageng Koetoe's territory, to continue his mission. He invited Ki Ageng Koetoe to convert, but the latter declined, citing his advanced age and devotion to his ancestral faith, though he did not forbid his subjects from converting.

Unsatisfied with this stalemate, Batara Katong persisted in his efforts to convert Ki Ageng Koetoe. Tensions escalated into a protracted conflict between the Muslim and "Buda" factions. The war fluctuated for years. Eventually, Ki Ageng Koetoe mobilized his full strength, including ascetics (*adjar*) from the mountains.

During these battles, Ki Ageng Koetoe's forces often held the advantage, particularly through the use of a formidable bull as a mount.

In one night attack led by Ki Ageng Koetoe and the ascetic of Mount Bajangkaki, the Muslim forces suffered heavy casualties and were forced to retreat. Batara Katong himself was separated from his troops and fled to the west of the Tempocran River. Deeply distressed, he returned to Demak to seek reinforcements. The Sultan provided a new contingent of believers led by Kiai Sela-Adji. With two primary commanders—Ki Ageng Mirah and Ki Ageng Sela-Adji—Batara Katong returned to Plampitan and mobilized the converted populations of the north. They moved south and established a base in the village of Sawo to prepare for a decisive confrontation.

Ki Ageng Koetoe, aware of the mobilization, gathered his followers and ascetics. In a night encounter east of Sawo, the Muslim forces again faced difficulties. Ki Ageng Koetoe possessed superior night vision, whereas Batara Katong's forces struggled in the darkness. Batara Katong retreated to a hermitage on Mount Bajangkaki to pray for divine guidance on how to overcome his adversary.

According to tradition, Batara Katong received a divine sign: he must utilize a specific formation (*boro-anggoel*) and illuminate the battlefield with "Majapat" torches in all four cardinal directions. The rationale was that Ki Ageng Koetoe's night vision would be blinded by the sudden light, rendering him vulnerable.

Before the final victory, Batara Katong endured further hardships, including physical exhaustion and lack of provisions. Legend states that he encountered a young cow; though his followers wished to slaughter it for food, Batara Katong refused, instead consuming only its milk, which miraculously restored his strength.

During the final midnight battle in the dense darkness, the Muslim forces ignited their torches. As predicted, Ki Ageng Koetoe was blinded. His bull, unable to see, collided with a large tree and collapsed. Kiai Sela-Adji seized the opportunity and pierced Ki Ageng Koetoe with a spear. As Ki Ageng Koetoe expired, his body reportedly vanished into the air, and a voice was heard vowing that his descendants would one day seek vengeance against the descendants of Batara Katong. Following the victory, the remaining "Buda" adherents submitted and converted to Islam. Batara Katong then organized the administration: Ki Ageng Sela-Adji governed the southern region from Nglangoe, Ki Ageng Mirah governed the west (Samarata), Ki Ageng Posong governed the Pacitan highlands, and Minak Sopal governed the Tanggoel highlands. Batara Katong himself ruled the north from Plampitan. He issued a decree forbidding his descendants from eating beef, in gratitude for the milk that saved him.

The administration was peaceful and focused on Islamic education. Numerous boarding schools (*pondok*) were established, and Ponorogo became renowned for its Qur'anic and legal scholarship. The name "Panarago" is said to be derived from the phrase *Pano marang raga*, implying a deep understanding of the self and one's spiritual origin and destination.

II. Pacitan

Following the Mangkoeboemèn war, an official of Prince Mangkoenagoro named Kiaketipo was appointed as the regent of Nggengan. His appointment stemmed from an incident where he provided the Prince with *poerbo* fruit (ripened forest fruit) during a period of famine in the wilderness. Consequently, the region was renamed Patjitan, derived from the word *patjit* (snacks/fruit eaten during travel). After the death of Setraketepo, his son Setrawidjaja succeeded him. During his tenure, Pacitan came under the jurisdiction of the Dutch Government.

Setrawidjaja was notoriously fearful of the Dutch, eventually fleeing to the forests of Mount Manda to avoid contact with them. The administration was left to a village head named Kiai Djajaniman. Recognizing Djajaniman's capability and cooperation, the Dutch eventually removed Setrawidjaja and appointed Djajaniman as the Regent of Pacitan with the title Raden Toemenggoeng Djajakarnjo.

III. Madiun

During the Pajang era, Sultan Adiwidjaja granted the Madiun territory to his relative, Pangeran Mas, who took the title Panembahan Madioen. Later, when Panembahan Senopati of Mataram sought to expand his hegemony, Madiun was conquered. The Panembahan of Madiun fled to Madjakarta, and the territory was annexed by Mataram. Later, a daughter of the Madiun ruler was married to Senopati, and the lineage was eventually restored to govern Madiun as vassals.

Under the Dutch, the eleven original districts of Madiun (including Ngawi, Magetan, and Caruban) were consolidated into three primary regencies: Madiun, Magetan, and Ngawi.

IV. Chronicle of Jenggala-Manik (1100-1200)

In the 13th century (Saka), a sage named Resi Gentajoe practiced asceticism on the northern slopes of Mount Wilis. He ruled the kingdom of Koripan. He had five children. The eldest, a daughter, became a female ascetic known as Dewi Kilisoetji, residing in the Selomangleng cave. His four sons became kings of Jenggala-Manik, Tamenang (Kediri), Kerawan, and Tenggeroe.

The King of Jenggala-Manik, Lemboe Amilochoer, presided over a prosperous era. His son, Raden Pandji Amoe-Mertopati, was a renowned warrior and inventor of weaponry. He married Dewi Sekartadji of Tamenang after winning a grand tournament against rival kings, including the formidable Prabu Klono-Sewardono. Their son, Koedalalean (Prabu Moesa-Tandreman), later succeeded to the throne. However, a catastrophic eruption of Mount Bidjoero (presumably Kelud or a nearby peak) destroyed the capital with lava. The King and his survivors migrated west to the Piangan region near the Moewar River.

V. Chronicle of Kediri

After the era of the Tamenang kings, the administration was passed to the female ascetic Dewi Kilisoetji. Because she was a *kedi* (a woman who does not menstruate or remains a virgin/ascetic), the kingdom was renamed Kediri. Later, the kingdom was disrupted by the eruptions of Mount Kelud.

The Selomangleng Hermitage

The Selomangleng cave was the retreat of Dewi Kilisoetji. It is situated on the slopes of Mount Wilis, carved into a massive rock formation. The cave features intricate stone carvings of figures and characters, indicating it was man-made. It remains a site of pilgrimage and offerings for many people.

VI. Siman and Berawa Villages

In ancient times, Siman and Berawa were home to two highly spiritual sages. They established strict moral codes: prohibiting theft, lying, adultery, and gambling. Violators were said to be devoured by tigers. One sage reportedly possessed a “weretiger” (*matjan gadoengan*) that served as a guardian.

Legend says the sage created a magical spring; drinking from one side turned a person into a tiger, while drinking from the other restored their human form.

VII. Lodaya

Lodaya is a vast forest in the southern Blitar region, famous for its tigers. Tradition holds that these are “weretigers.” The legend involves an official who was exiled to the forest with a *bendè* (gong) and a *wayang* puppet. He taught an elderly couple the magic to transform into tigers to easily obtain food. In exchange, they were tasked with protecting the sacred gong and puppet. To this day, people believe that if they “entrust” their valuables to the spirits of Lodaya, any thief who steals them will be hunted down by the tigers.

VIII. Pajajaran

In the 14th century, Prabu Moesa-Tandreman established the kingdom of Pajajaran in the Piangan region. The name derived from the orderly rows (*djadjar*) of cypress trees planted throughout the capital. The kingdom was known for its just rule.

During the reign of Prabu Poenekas, a conflict arose involving a sage who predicted that a child born of the King’s concubine would one day seize the throne. The King attempted to kill the child, but the infant was set adrift in a chest and rescued by a fisherman in Karawang. The boy grew up to be Djaka Krawang. He eventually entered the King’s service and proved his valor by subduing a rogue elephant and defeating invaders. He was appointed as a high official with the title Aria Banjakwidè.

However, Aria Banjakwidè eventually betrayed the King. He constructed an iron house with magical properties (climate control and musical resonance). He lured the King inside, locked it, and cast it into the Karawang River. Aria Banjakwidè then seized the throne as Srimahardja-Sèkti. The legitimate crown prince fled to Mount Bang, where a sage advised him that he could not reclaim Pajajaran but must instead travel east. He was told to establish a new kingdom where the bitter *maja* fruit grew—foreshadowing the rise of Majapahit.

IX. Rawa Campur

Rawa Campur (in Tulungagung) was formerly the site of the Krawa kingdom. Near the Panampihan temple, there is a legendary “itchy earth” (*lemah gatal*)—a patch of ground so hot or cursed that any organic matter falling on it is incinerated. Residents of this swampy region traditionally consumed “cork fish rice” (*sega iwak koetoch*), a unique preparation of dried and pounded fish served as a staple.

X. Kiai Higede Ngiman

Ki Ageng Liman was a son of Sunan Giri. He was exiled to the slopes of Mount Wilis (Mount Liman) because of his perceived hostility toward certain Islamic practices and his preference for martial arts and asceticism. He gathered many disciples and eventually led a rebellion, but was captured and executed in Solo.

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